



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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KING MACKEREL COMMERCIAL HOOK-AND-LINE FISHERY CLOSED IN SOUTHERN FLORIDA WEST COAST SUBZONE

The commercial hook-and-line fishery for Gulf group king mackerel in the southern Florida west coast subzone is closed, effective 12:01 a.m. April 9, 2004, through June 30, 2004, between the Lee/Collier County and the Collier/Monroe County, Florida boundaries (see reverse). NOAA Fisheries has determined that the commercial quota for the 2003/2004 fishing year of 520,312 pounds of king mackerel for this segment of the commercial fishery has been reached. Along with the previous closures of the western zone (September 24, 2003) and the northern Florida west coast subzone (November 13, 2003), the commercial fishery for Gulf group king mackerel is now closed from the U.S./Mexico border to the Collier/Monroe County, Florida boundary until July 1, 2004. However, the fishery for vessels using run-around gillnets in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the southern Florida west coast subzone remains open, except for weekend and holiday closures. If the quota for this 2003/2004 fishing year is not harvested, the gillnet fishery automatically will close July 1, 2004, through 6:00 a.m. on January 18, 2005, the day after the Martin Luther King Jr. federal holiday (50 CFR 622.34(p)).

During the closure period, no person aboard a vessel for which a commercial permit for king mackerel has been issued may fish for Gulf group king mackerel in the EEZ of the closed zone, subzone, or gear type. There are exceptions, however, for a person aboard a charter vessel or headboat, and a person aboard a vessel issued a commercial vessel permit for king mackerel with a gillnet endorsement. A person aboard a vessel that has a valid charter vessel/headboat permit for coastal migratory pelagic fish may continue to retain king mackerel in or from the closed zone/subzone under the 2-fish daily bag limit, provided the vessel is operating as a charter vessel or headboat. Charter vessels or headboats that

hold a commercial king mackerel permit are considered to be operating as a charter vessel or headboat when they carry a passenger who pays a fee or when more than three persons are aboard, including operator and crew.

A person aboard a vessel that has a valid commercial vessel permit for king mackerel with a gillnet endorsement may continue to retain king mackerel in or from the EEZ of the southern Florida west coast subzone under the 25,000-pound daily trip bag limit. Such harvest and possession is authorized only if the fishery is open, the gillnet used has a stretched mesh of 4.75 inches or larger, and no other gear is used to harvest king mackerel. Gulf group king mackerel harvested with gear other than a run-around gillnet may not be retained.

During the closure, no king mackerel caught in the closed zone or subzone, or with the closed gear type, may be purchased, bartered, traded, or sold. This includes recreational and tournament caught fish. The prohibition of sale, however, does not apply to trade in king mackerel that were harvested, landed ashore and bartered, traded, or sold before the closure and held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

Closure of this commercial king mackerel fishery complies with regulations implemented under the Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic (FMP) and is necessary to protect the Gulf group king mackerel resource. Regulations implemented under the FMP require closure of any segment of the commercial fishery when its quota is reached or is projected to be reached. Quotas and closure provisions for mackerel fisheries were developed in the FMP jointly by the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils.

GULF GROUP KING MACKEREL: FLORIDA WEST COAST SEASONAL BOUNDARIES

See page for maps.

GULF GROUP KING MACKEREL: STATUS OF QUOTAS AND DAILY TRIP/LANDING LIMITS FOR COMMERCIAL FISHERIES FOR THE 2003/2004 FISHING YEAR

| ZONE/SUBZONE | QUOTA (POUNDS, lb) | DAILY VESSEL TRIP LIMITS | DURATION OF TRIP LIMITS | STATUS | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| | | | | BEGINNING | CURRENT |
| EASTERN ZONE (Florida) | 2,250,000 | | | | |
| East Coast Subzone ¹ | 1,040,625 | 50 Fish | Nov 1, 2003 until 780,469 lb | Opened: Nov 1, 2003 | Closed: Apr 1, 2004 |
| Hook and Line | | 75 Fish ² | Feb 1, 2004 until Mar 31, 2004 | | |
| West Coast Subzones | 1,209,375 | | | | |
| <u>Northern</u> | | | | | |
| Hook and Line | 168,750 | 1,250 lb | Jul 1, 2003 until 126,563 lb | Opened: Jul 1, 2003 | Closed: Nov 13, 2003 |
| | | 500 lb | Oct 30, 2003 until Nov 13, 2003 | | |
| | | 0 lb | Nov 13, 2003 until Jul 1, 2004 | | |
| <u>Southern</u> | | | | | |
| Hook and Line | 520,312 | 1,250 lb | Jul 1, 2003 until 390,234 lb | Opened: Jul 1, 2003 | Closed: April 9, 2004 |
| | | 500 lb | Mar 20, 2004 until Apr 8, 2004 lb | | |
| | | 0 lb | Apr 9, 2004 until Jul 1, 2004 | | |
| Gillnet | 520,312 | 25,000 lb | Jan 20, 2004 until 520,312 lb | Opened: Jan 20, 2004 | Closes Jul 1, 2004 ³ |
| WESTERN ZONE (TX-AL) | 1,010,00 | 3,000 lb | Jul 1, 2003 until 1,010,000 lb | Opened: Jul 1, 2003 | Closed: Sep 24, 2003 |
| Hook and Line | | 0 lb | Sep 24, 2003 until Jul 1, 2004 | | |

¹ The Florida east coast subzone, located between the Flagler/Volusia and Miami-Dade/Monroe County boundaries, exists only from November 1 through March 31, when the Gulf migratory group of king mackerel extends into that area. From April 1 through October 31, king mackerel landed in that area belong to the Atlantic migratory group.

² Trip limit increased from 50 to 75 fish/day on February 1, 2004, when NOAA Fisheries determined that less than 75 percent, or 780,469 pounds, of the Florida east coast subzone quota would not be taken by that date.

³ If the gillnet quota for the 2003/2004 fishing year is not harvested, this fishery automatically will close from July 1, 2004, until 6:00 a.m., January 18, 2005.

To report violations of commercial trip limits or closures, contact NOAA Fisheries Law Enforcement Division at 727/570-5344 or 1-800/853-1964. NOAA Fisheries, is an agency of the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).